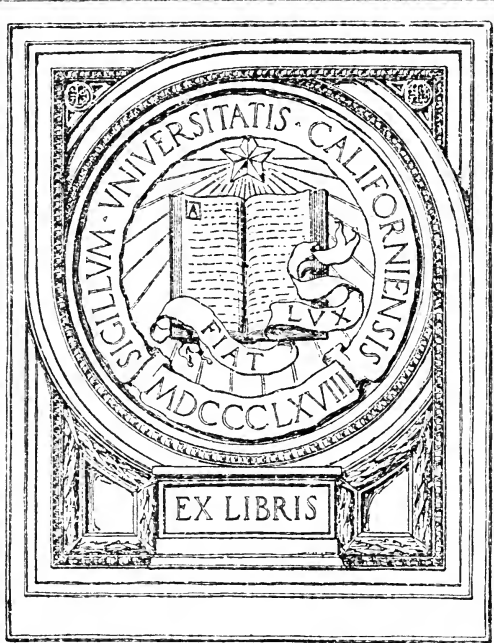


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REPORT

OF THE

COMMISSIONER OF IMMIGRATION

FOR

COLFAX COUNTY.

BY

HARRY WHIGHAM.

BY AUTHORITY OF THE TERRITORIAL BUREAU.

SANTA FE, N. M.
ERA SOUTHWESTERN PRINT.
1880.

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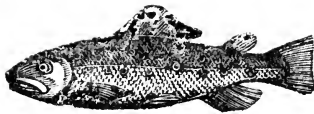
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REPORT

OF THE

COMMISSIONER OF COLFAX COUNTY.

CIMARRON, COLFAX COUNTY, N. M., July 27, 1880.

R. W. WEBB, ESQ., Sec'y Bureau of Immigration :

DEAR SIR—In reply to your request of May 1st, I beg to say that knowledge has been carefully sought on the resources and present development of Colfax County, and for the information and use of your Bureau I submit the following report :

Colfax County is situated in the northeastern corner of New Mexico, has an area of some 4,500,000 acres, and a population, according to the census of 1880, of 3,341 ; about half of these are native Mexicans. It is formed half of prairie, lying in the south and eastern portion, and half of mountain and high mesa, or table land in the remainder. The altitude varies from 5,500 on the prairies to an average of 8,000 through the mountain parks. Some of the highest peaks on the western border are 14,000 feet and over. The prairie portion of the county is used principally as a pasture for large herds of cattle, sheep and horses, the valleys along the water courses being farmed to a considerable extent, by means of irrigation. In the mountains there are numerous herds also, and some of the best farming lands are to be found in the many parks there. The mountains are covered with the various species of pine, and the piñon and cedar indigenous to the country. The former is of an excellent quality for lumber and covers an area of some 700,000 acres. The current price of good merchantable lumber is \$25 per thousand feet. Some oak is found, but of an inferior character and of little value for commercial purposes. The greatest wealth of the mountains, however, is in the vast

area of the coal beds and in the base and precious metals, which will be referred to hereafter. There is but little timber on the prairies, and it is found along the streams and in the cañons which break through the prairie in many places, also, on the side of the table lands which dot the plains. Of this timber there is very little suitable for lumber, it is principally cottonwood, box-elder, locust, piñon and cedar. While on the subject of trees it may be said that cottonwoods of two or three years growth are transplanted with success, and that several thousand young catalpas planted in Cimarron this year are growing finely.

The principal industry of the county at present is raising cattle and sheep. The grazing lands of Colfax County are justly celebrated and are unrivaled in any section of the Rocky Mountains. No business has proved a more lucrative one here than stock raising. There are in Colfax County at present, it is estimated, 75,000 head of cattle, 2000,00 head of sheep, and 7,000 head of hores and brood mares. The following table will not be out of place, as not only giving an estimate of the profits in the cattle business here—and it is indorsed by cattle men hereabouts as a fair exhibit—but will also give current prices of common stock, with which it starts, and the price of the improved also.

Let us say the stockraiser makes a purchase in September of a herd composed of the following grade and class :

CAPITAL INVESTED IN STOCK.

150 Young Cows and Calves at \$25.....	\$2,250 00
100 Two-year-old Heifers at \$12.....	1,200 00
100 Two-year-old Steers at \$12.....	1,200 00
75 Yearling Heifers at \$7.....	525 00
75 Yearling Steers at \$7.....	525 00
10 High Grade Bulls at \$75.....	750 00
	<hr/>
	\$6,450 00

CAPITAL INVESTED IN RANCH, ETC.

Ranch, Corrals, etc.....	\$250 00
Horses and Equipments.....	250 00
	<hr/>
	\$500 00

SUMMARY ACCOUNT FOR FIVE YEARS.

End of Year.	No. of Stock.	Value.	Sales—3-year-old Steers.	Expenses.	Bnk Acct.	
First	530	\$ 7,140 00	100 at \$18 00	\$1,800	\$ 680 00	\$1,120 00
Second.....	655	8,465 00	75 at 18 00	1,350	750 00	600 00
Third.....	855	11,200 00	60 at 18 00	1,080	850 00	230 00
Fourth.....	1063	14,620 00	100 at 22 50	2,250	1,100 00	1,150 00
Fifth.....	1321	18,477 50	130 at 22 50	2,925	1,500 00	1,425 00
Total...						\$4,525 00

Value of Stock.. .. .	\$18,477 50
Value of Ranch, Horses, etc.....	1,000 00
Bank Account.....	4,525 00
	\$24,002 50
Capital invested.....	\$6,950 00
Profit in Five Years.....	\$17,052 00

In the above table we have added \$500 to the value of the ranch horses, etc., at the end of the five years which is a low estimate of the money charged to "expenses" which went for the purchase of additional horses. The increase of cattle has been reckoned at 85 per cent., allowing 5 per cent. of loss from natural causes in young stock. The improvement in the stock bred from fine bulls has been reckoned at 25 per cent.

While the cattle business is generally regarded as attended with less risk and more certain in its results, many claim for sheep raising a larger profit. Our observation—from fourteen years residence in New Mexico and Colorado—is, that where it is desired to invest a large capital without giving a close personal attention to the business, cattle would be preferable, but where a man desires to invest a small or moderate capital in either business and give it his whole time, more money and quicker returns would be made by purchasing sheep. The annual wool clip is a timely, certain and good income to those who wish to invest the larger part of their capital at once.

The present prices of sheep and wool are as follows :

Common Mexican Ewes, young.....	\$1 50
Common Mexican Wethers.....	1 25
Graded Merino Ewes, young.....	\$2 00 to 3 00
Graded Wethers.....	2 00 to 3 00

It is difficult to give quotations of wool as they are con-

stantly varying; prices this year, however, have been from 15 cents per pound for the lowest grade of Mexican, to 24 cents for the choicest improved, unwashed. The wool clip varies from 2 to 6 pounds on flocks of ewes and wethers. The general average in this county on all flocks would be 3 1-2 pounds. The net increase of sheep is 80 per cent.

The price of horses, broke to saddle or harness, varies from \$40 for the ordinary stock-pony to \$150 for a good carriage horse.

The amount of land susceptible of cultivation it would be difficult to accurately say; of that which can be irrigated by the natural water courses we estimate there is approximately one hundred and fifty thousand acres; there is not to exceed ten thousand acres under cultivation at present. The average yield of corn in this county has not exceeded 30 bushels to the acre, although we know of farmers who have raised large fields averaging 45 bushels. For oats there is no better country; the government standard for a bushel of oats is 32 pounds, but here the oats are so heavy that a bushel weighs 42 pounds, and the amount grown to the acre will easily average 45 bushels. This grain will grow either on the prairie or in the mountains, but on the prairie, near the foothills, and in the mountain valleys nearest the prairie, it does the best. Wheat does well both on the prairie and in the mountains. Thirty bushels of wheat through the mountains is an average crop, although we know of individual farmers whose crops have greatly exceeded this amount. The wheat is unsurpassed in quality. The cultivation of bald barley has been neglected to a great extent, while it is one of the most profitable crops that can be raised here. The soil throughout both prairie and mountains is unusually deep and capable of producing immense crops. In the western half of the county we count the following streams, the valleys of which afford the most natural farming lands: The Sweetwater, with a farming valley 20 miles long; the Rayado, length of farming valley 20 miles; the Cimarroncito farming valley is 12 miles; the farming valley of the Cimarron is 32 miles long and in places is 2 miles wide; the Poñil farming valley is 25 miles long; the farming valley of the Ver-

mejo is a very beautiful one and is 40 miles long; the entire length of the Red river through the county exceeds 75 miles, the length of its valley on the prairie is some fifty miles, but its volume of water is not proportionate. The valleys of the Uña de Gato and Chicarica are very beautiful and each is about 15 miles long. All of these streams usually have plenty of water and the soil is as rich and mellow as can be found. In the eastern part of the country there is also considerable farming lands, but not nearly so much as in the western half. In the mountains, there is in the Merino Valley, Ute Valley, Valle de Piedra, and Poñil and Vermejo parks, much fine farming land, in which the best wheat, potatoes, beets, cabbage, carrots, parsnips, turnips, artichokes, etc., are grown. Indeed, for the vegetables mentioned, the climate and soil of the mountains are preferable. In the production of many vegetables this country excells, especially in onions, beets and cabbage. We have seen onions grown here which were seven inches in diameter and weighed four pounds each, and the delicacy of their flavor gives them peculiar excellence. We have not heard just how many have been grown on an acre of ground, but 200 bushel is not an unlikely figure. Irish potatoes grow remarkably well throughout the mountains, 400 bushels to the acre have been frequently raised, and 200 bushels is an average crop these potatoes are very fine, and the amount of potato land is practically unlimited. We have seen a cabbage grown in Cimarron which weighed 37 1-2 pounds. A pumpkin grown on the Vermejo which weighed 80 pounds.

Of fruit growing in Colfax County very little may be said, except as to the wonderful adaptability of both climate and soil, and the strange neglect of the important industry in the past. With the exception of five or six of this wealthiest ranchmen in the county, no one has yet planted fruit trees. Every spare dollar has been invested in cattle or sheep, and fruit trees apparently deemed a luxury, the purchase of which must be postponed. Yet those who have planted them have been entirely successful. Wild plums, cherries, strawberries, currants and gooseberries grow here, and the former is a most luscious fruit, and a certain crop. Apples, cherries, plums, peaches,

strawberries, pears, currants, gooseberries, raspberries, blackberries and grapes have been tried here with success. We need a number of good gardeners, who could command excellent situations at once, and some enterprising nurserymen, who could stimulate the planting of trees and establish a good business for themselves. There is no industry here which has been so badly neglected and which affords a better field for the immigrant who understands this business than market-gardening and fruit-culture.

Of the mineral productions of this county we have gold, silver, copper, lead, iron, manganese, plumbago, fire-clay and coal. The gold mines are situated in the Moreno Valley, in the valley and at the head of Ute Creek, on the Poñil and on the Cimarroncito. The most important mines in the Moreno are placers. These were discovered in 1868, and have been worked continuously ever since. This district includes many rich gulches, of which the following are the most important: Willow, Humbug, Grouse, Michigan and Big Nigger. These have all been worked by hydraulics with great success. There is on the bars between the gulches and in the valley of the Moreno a vast area of land which has not yet been worked, all of which prospects fully 50 cents to the cubic yard. Numerous lodés of gold quartz have been discovered in this district, but few developed to any great extent. The water for working the placers is brought principally by a large ditch from the head of a neighboring stream in the Sierra Madres. On Ute Creek there are also rich placers which have been worked since 1869. But the principal mines in the Ute Creek district—which is divided from the Moreno by the Baldy range of mountains—are the quartz lodés. Chief of these is the Aztec, which was discovered in 1869, and worked the following year with a yield of some six or seven hundred thousand dollars. It is a good vein of free milling ore. There are a number of other lodés which have been worked for years past, and some recent discoveries which promise well. Principal among the latter are the Rebel Chief, Mountain Queen, and discoveries at the head of the Poñil and on the Cimarroncito. The two former are gold quartz. On Poñil the ores run 50 per cent. in cop-

per and high in silver and gold; they are veins about three feet thick and are regarded as important discoveries. On the Cimarroncito a number of gold lodes have been discovered, and it seems more than likely that this may prove an important district. There is a 15-stamp mill at the head of the Poñil owned by the New Mexico and Rhode Island Mining Company. The aggregate yield of gold in this county since the discovery in 1868 is variously estimated between two and three million dollars. Mining here is regarded as but in its infancy, and there is every confidence that the future annual yield will greatly exceed the past.

In the vast area of its coal beds, however, we think Colfax County will in the future find its greatest commercial importance. There is in Colfax County some six hundred thousand acres of coal land, which, for all commercial purposes, compares well with the best soft coal of Pennsylvania. The following analysis of the coal was made from specimens taken near its surface, by Frank E. Nipher, Professor of Physics and Chemistry in the Washington University, of St. Louis:

Fuel—100	Specific Gravity.	Ls. av. per Cub. Ft.	Moisture.	Ash.	Color of Ash	Coke.	Total Volatile.
Top.	1,345	84.0	2.6	9.3	Brown	60.9	39.1
Middle.	1,358	85.4	3.1	10.4	Pink.	61.9	38.1
Bottom.	1,388	86.7	2.6	15.6	White	63.1	36.9
Average.	1,367	85.36	2.57	11.76		61.96	38.03

The coking coal of Trinidad, Colorado, has 68 per cent. of coke, and as it is in the same geological formation as ours, there is no doubt but this coal averages about the same where it is free from atmospheric influence. A little coal of a semi-anthracite nature has been found, but the formation is nearly all bituminous. On the surface the veins vary in width from one to seven feet. Before the advent of the railroad no present value could be given to this mineral, and even now it is not mined to any extent worth mentioning, but it is within our knowledge that the railroad people and the owners of the coal are making preparations to develop this industry on a proper basis. The value and importance of this immense supply of fuel is in the fact that while numerous and extensive

mines of smelting ores have already been found in the southern part of the Territory and in Arizona, fuel of all kinds is extremely scarce there, and no available coal exists. As soon as the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad and its extensions unite us with the Pacific, the coke of this county may find a demand even in California. In connection with the large deposits of iron ore found here our coal may also prove of great use. There is, on the eastern slope of the Moreno Valley, a mountain of iron ore pronounced by experts to be of first-class quality for smelting. In the mountains at the head of the Cimarroncito it is found of superior quality and practically unlimited in quantity. In the neighborhood of Raton—the first station of the A., T. & S. F. south of the Raton Mountains—a lower grade of iron ore is found in connection with the coal beds. On the Vermejo this low grade ore is also found. Nodular ore is found here always in connection with the coal strata. It might be well to note, that as manganese is found in the county in large quantities, the manufacture of Bessemer steel could be carried on here to advantage. With the repairs and extensions of the A., T. & S. F., D. & R. G. and Atlantic and Pacific Railroads, now building in this Territory, and the prospective construction of other roads, we can hardly doubt it would find a ready and profitable market. Many other manufactories might be established here with profit, more particularly smelting works and woolen mills. We have shown that this county alone annually produces 700,000 pounds of wool, and all the wool grown in the Territory passes through it on its way to the mills of Missouri, Illinois and other Eastern States. We receive a good part of it again in the shape of blankets, carpets and clothing. We believe there is not a woolen mill in operation in the Territory. The manufacture of beet sugar might be conducted here to a profit; these vegetables seem particularly adapted to this soil and climate, and grow to an enormous size, 20 and 25 pounds not being an unusual weight.

Of towns or villages in the county we name the following:

Cimarron, the county seat.

Elizabethtown, a mining town in the Moreno Valley, 28 miles distant from Cimarron.

Springer, a new town on the A., T. and S. F. R. R., 21 miles distant from Cimarron, and the shipping point for Cimarron, the mines, Taos, the eastern part of the county and the Panhandle of Texas.

Otero and Raton, both small villages on the line of the A., T. & S. F.

Cimarron is a small place, but beautifully located at the base of the mountains, and is at an altitude of 6,310 feet. The residents are principally Americans, the buildings are of adobe, plastered with lime mortar and present a neat and substantial appearance. It has a good church building, and a public school about half the year.

Taxes are generally one per cent., sometimes one and one-fourth—this includes territorial, county and school tax.

The ordinary wages of laborers in this county are \$20 per month and board, or \$1.25 per day, without board. Mechanics receive from \$2.50 for carpenters to \$3.25 for plasterers and masons. Adobes, 9x18x4 are laid in the wall for \$22 per thousand.

There are in the county 23 authorized school districts and, on an average, in sixteen of them, public, non-sectarian schools are conducted for about half the year.

The altitude of Elizabethtown is 8,600, of Otero, 6,450, Raton Pass, 7,600, Taos Pass, 9,000, Springer is about 5,500 and Baldy Mountain is 12,200 feet.

There is a charm in the climate of Colfax County which none better appreciate than those who having once lived here, seek to make their abode in the States. The dryness and purity of the atmosphere creates a perfect physical life and produces a wonderful feeling of exhilaration. With all the advantages of dryness of atmosphere and of altitude, this county, lying directly south of Colorado—4 degrees south of Denver—possesses a much milder climate through the winter months than that state; and the Raton Mountains and high mesas adjoining, extending the whole length of the county along the northern boundary, afford excellent protection from the winds of the north. Our average temperature during the summer months would not exceed 82 degrees, at noon, in the shade, and the winters are

mild and dry. For persons who are afflicted with pulmonary disease a more desirable climate cannot be found.

We have no means of knowing what the rainfall may be, but in ordinary seasons we have heavy showers in May, with the regular rainy season in July and August, and occasional rains in September and October. The rainfall, however, is light and for farming the people depend entirely upon irrigation. I have no doubt but in the near future the sinking of wells and use of wind mills on the prairie portion of the county will become a common custom among stockmen, who will by such means have a better use of their range.

The western portion of the county is covered by a Mexican Grant and is at the present time owned by the Maxwell Land Grant Company, whose offices are at Cimarron. This grant was given in 1841 by the Government of old Mexico to Beau-bien and Miranda, citizens of that Republic. In 1860 it was confirmed by Congress, in conformity with the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, and patented by the United States Government in May, 1879. It comprises 1,400,000 acres in the county and includes the mines and the soil, with the exception of that portion of it which the owners have sold from time to time. Prospectors can obtain from the grant owners, however, a half interest in the vein of any precious metal they may discover. By reason of this grant we cannot give the price of land in that part of the county. The unoccupied lands in the eastern part of the county belong to the government and can be preëmpted at \$1.15 per acre, or entered as a homestead.

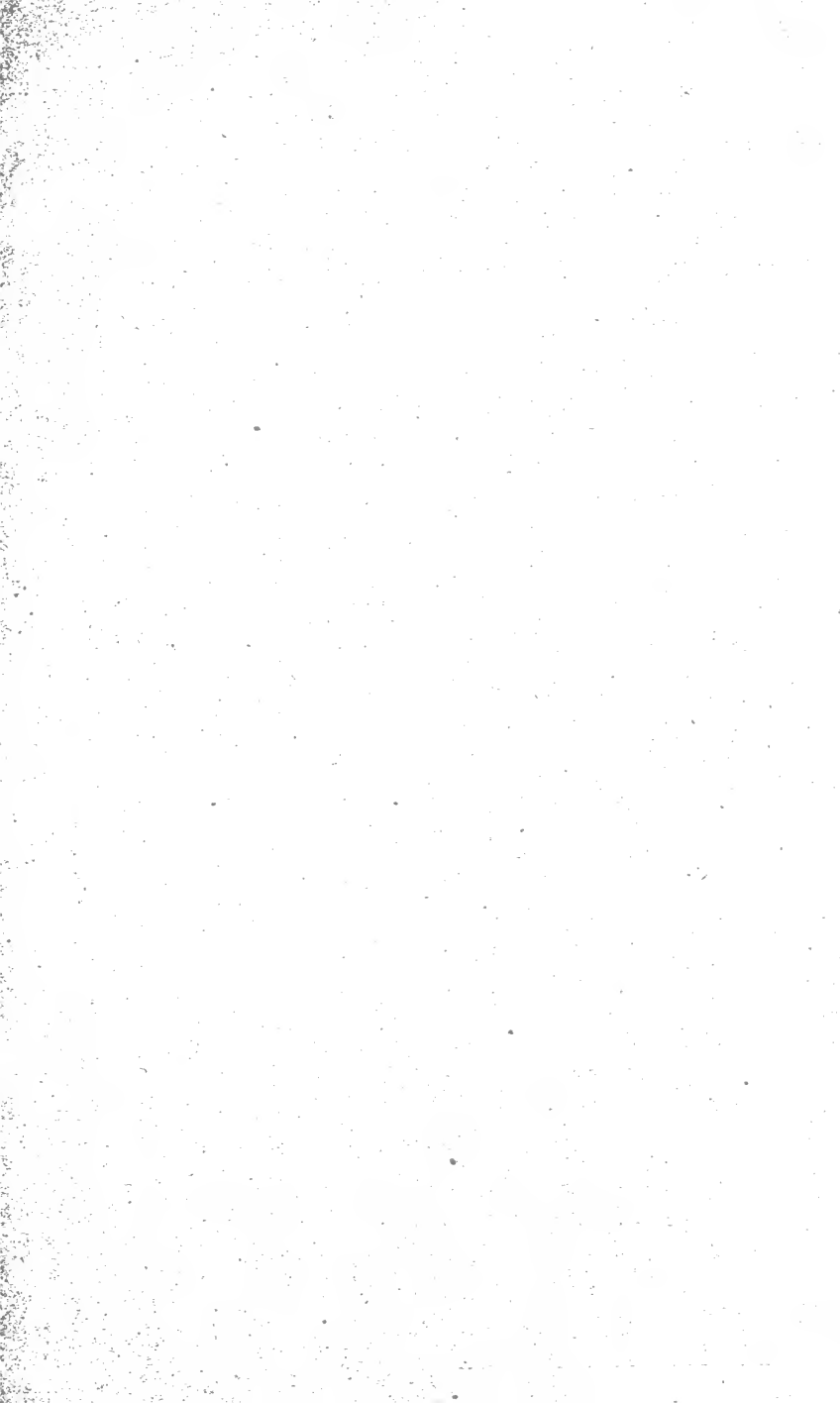
In conclusion we may say that nature has been most bounteous toward this county, but the hand of man has as yet done comparatively little. Not in Switzerland, nor the most chosen resorts of the old or new world can scenery more beautiful be found than in the parks which nestle at the base of our lofty peaks. Clothed with a rich herbage of grama grass, which is nutritious all the year round, and watered by brooks and streams which sparkle over their gravelly bed, and in each of which countless speckled trout find a home, these parks are a paradise for pleasure seekers. The area of the parks in the aggregate exceeds one hundred thousand acres. To hunters they afford

a fine field for sport. Deer, bears, turkeys and grouse are found in abundance, with a few elk, mountain sheep and mountain lions or cougars. And while these parks charm by their soft lines and beauty, their neighbors, the mighty peaks of the Sierra Madre, must inspire awe in all who behold them. Grand mountains of perpetual snow in many of whose gorges the foot of man has never trod are here, holding in their massive sides rich treasures of gold, silver and copper for the benefit of the adventurous and lucky finder.

There is no land to be found where a healthier or more beautiful home may be made than in the mountain parks of Colfax County.

Respectfully yours,

HARRY WHIGHAM.
Commissioner for Colfax County.



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Stockton, Calif.
PAT. JAN 21, 1908

